

## George Washington to His Catholic Fellow-Citizens

*John G. Shea's "History of the Catholic Church in the United States."*

THE election of General George Washington as President under the Constitution and the happy organization of the new Government were viewed by Catholics with joy. To express the sentiments which pervaded the Faithful throughout the United States, the Bishop-elect of Baltimore, in behalf of the Catholic clergy, with Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, and Daniel Carroll, of Maryland; Dominick Lynch, of New York, and Thomas FitzSimons, of Pennsylvania, on behalf of the Catholic laity, presented to General Washington the following address:

"Sir,

"We have been long impatient to testify our joy, and unbounded confidence in your being called, by an Unanimous Vote, to the first station of a country, in which that unanimity could not have been obtained without the previous merit of unexampled services, of eminent wisdom and unblemished virtue. Our congratulations have not reached you sooner, because our scattered situation prevented our communication, and the collecting of these sentiments which warmed every breast. But the delay has furnished us with the opportunity, not merely of presaging the happiness to be expected under your administration, but of bearing testimony to that which we experience already. It is your peculiar talent, in war and in peace, to afford security to those who commit their protection into your hands. In war you shield them from the ravages of armed hostility; in peace, you establish public tranquillity, by the justice and moderation, not less than by the vigour, of your government. By example, as well as by vigilance, you extend the influence of laws on the manners of our fellow-citizens. You encourage respect for religion; and inculcate by words and actions, that principle, on which the welfare of nations so much depends, that a superintending providence governs the events of the world, and watches over the conduct of men. Your exalted maxims, and unwearied attention to the moral and physical improvement

of our country, have produced already the happiest effects. Under your administration, America is animated with zeal for the attainment and encouragement of useful literature. She improves her agriculture; extends her commerce; and acquires with foreign nations a dignity unknown to her before. From these happy events, in which none can feel a warmer interest than ourselves, we derive additional pleasure, by recollecting that you, Sir, have been the principal instrument to effect so rapid a change in our political situation. This prospect of national prosperity is peculiarly pleasing to us on another account; because, whilst our country preserves her freedom and independence, we shall have a well founded title to claim from her justice, the equal rights of citizenship, as the price of our blood spilt under your eyes, and of our common exertions for her defence, under your auspicious conduct—rights rendered more dear to us by the remembrance of former hardships. When we pray for the preservation of them, where they have been granted—and expect the full extension of them from the justice of those States, which still restrict them—when we solicit the protection of Heaven over our common country, we neither omit, nor can omit recommending your preservation to the singular care of Divine Providence; because we conceive that no human means are so available to promote the welfare of the United States as the prolongation of your health and life, in which are included the energy of your example, the wisdom of your counsels, and the persuasive eloquence of your virtues."

To this Address President Washington, on March 12, 1790, returned his reply in these terms:

"To the Roman Catholics in the United States of America.

"Gentlemen:—While I now receive with much satisfaction your congratulations on my being called, by an unanimous vote, to the first station in my Country; I cannot but duly notice your politeness in offering an apology for the unavoidable delay. As that delay has given you an opportunity of realizing, instead of anticipating, the benefits of the general Government; you will do me the justice to believe that your testimony of the increase of

the public prosperity, enhances the pleasure which I should otherwise have experienced from your affectionate Address.

"I feel that my conduct, in war and in peace, has met with more general approbation than could reasonably have been expected; and I find myself disposed to consider that fortunate circumstance, in a great degree, resulting from the able support and extraordinary candor of my fellow-citizens of all denominations.

"The prospect of national prosperity now before us is truly animating, and ought to excite the exertions of all good men to establish and secure the happiness of their Country, in the permanent duration of its Freedom and Independence. America, under the smiles of a Divine Providence—the protection of a good Government—and the cultivation of manners, morals and piety, cannot fail of attaining an uncommon degree of eminence, in literature, commerce, agriculture, improvements at home and respectability abroad.

"As mankind become more liberal, they will be more apt to allow, that all those who conduct themselves as worthy members of the Community are equally entitled to the protection of the civil Government. I hope ever to see America among the foremost nations in examples of justice and liberality. And I presume that your fellow-citizens will not forget the patriotic part which you took in the accomplishment of their Revolution, and the establishment of your Government: or the important assistance which they received from a nation in which the Roman Catholic faith is professed.

"I thank you, Gentlemen, for your kind concern for me. While my life and my health shall continue, in whatever situation I may be, it shall be my constant endeavor to justify the favourable sentiments which you are pleased to express of my conduct. And may the members of your Society in America, animated alone by the pure spirit of Christianity, and still conducting themselves as the faithful subjects of our free Government, enjoy ever temporal and spiritual felicity.

GEO. WASHINGTON."

A person, who strangely enough signed himself "Liberal," in a communication to the press, attacked the Catholic body. Dr. Carroll replied in June, 1789, in an article

addressed to the editor of the *Gazette of the United States*, in which the attack had appeared.

"Every friend to the rights of conscience, equal liberty, and diffusive happiness," Dr. Carroll said, "must have felt pain on seeing the attempt made by one of your correspondents \* \* \* to revive an odious system of religious intolerance \* \* \* Perhaps he is one of those who think it consistent with justice to exclude certain citizens from the honors and emoluments of society merely on account of their religious opinions, provided they be not restrained by racks and forfeitures, from the exercise of that worship which their consciences approve. If such be his views, in vain then have Americans associated into one great national union, under the express condition of not being shackled by religious tests, and under a firm persuasion that they were to retain, when associated, every natural right not expressly surrendered.

"Is it pretended that they who are the objects of an intended exclusion from certain offices of honor and advantage, have forfeited by any act of treason against the United States, the common rights of nature, or the stipulated rights of the political society of which they form a part? This the author has not presumed to assert. Their blood flowed as freely (in proportion to their numbers) to cement the fabric of independence, as that of any of their fellow-citizens. They concurred with perhaps greater unanimity than any other body of men, in recommending and promoting that government from whose influence America anticipates all the blessings of justice, peace, plenty, good order, and civil and religious liberty. What character shall we then give to a system of politics, calculated for the express purpose of divesting of rights legally acquired these citizens who are not only unoffending, but whose conduct has been highly meritorious?"

Dr. Carroll then took up the assertion that the ancestors of the American people left Europe to preserve the Protestant religion; and that Protestantism laid the foundation of this great and new empire, when, in fact, a great Protestant monarchy exerted all its power to crush, as a Catholic power did to save it.

"This writer," he continued, "attributes to his religion the merit of being most favorable to freedom; and affirms

that not only morality, but liberty likewise, must expire if his clergy should ever be contemned or neglected; all of which conveys a refined insinuation that liberty cannot consist with, or be cherished by, any other religious institution, which, therefore, he would give to understand it is not safe to countenance in a free government.

"I am anxious to guard against the impression intended by such insinuations; not merely for the sake of any one profession, but from an earnest regard to preserve inviolate forever in our new empire the great principle of religious freedom. The constitutions of some of the States continue still to entrench on the sacred rights of conscience, and men who have bled and opened their purses as freely, in the cause of liberty and independence, as any other citizens, are most unjustly excluded from the advantages which they contributed to establish. But if bigotry and narrow prejudices have hitherto prevented the cures of these evils, be it the duty of every lover of peace and justice to extend them no further."

## Charles Carroll, the Catholic "Signer"

**T**HREE were in the Colonies when the Revolution against English rule broke out, about 25,000 Catholics. Among the patriots who signed the Declaration of Independence these Catholics were represented by Charles Carroll of Maryland. Next to George Washington he was then the richest man in the colonies, and he was one of the most influential because of his international education and mental ability. He outlived all his patriotic colleagues and was the last of the "Signers" to die.

On the semi-centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll addressed the following communication to his fellow countrymen:

Grateful to Almighty God for the blessings which, through Jesus Christ Our Lord, He has conferred on my beloved country, in her emancipation and upon myself in permitting me, under circumstances of great mercy, to live to the age of eighty-nine years and to survive the fiftieth year of American Independence, and certifying by my present signature my approbation of the Declaration of Independence, adopted by Congress on the Fourth day of July 1776, to which I originally subscribed on the second day of August of the same year, and of which I am now the last surviving Signer,

"I do hereby recommend to the present and future generations, the principles of that important document as the best earthly inheritance their ancestors could bequeath to them, and I pray that the civil and religious liberties they have secured to my country may be perpetuated to the remotest posterity, and extended to the whole family of man.

"August 2, 1826.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton."

Mr. Carroll died on Nov. 14, 1832, at the residence of his daughter, Pratt Street, Baltimore.

Charles Carroll was born at Annapolis, Maryland, Sept. 19, 1737. His first school was that of the Jesuits at Bohemia Manor. In early manhood he was sent abroad and made his course at the Jesuit college of St. Omer in Flanders, finishing with some law studies in Paris and London.

The popular idea of the great dramatic event of July 4, 1776, is Trumbull's historic picture which is an artistic

fiction. No such scene took place on July 4, 1776. In fact the Declaration of Independence was not signed on that date at all.

The immortal document compiled by Thomas Jefferson in which the reasons for separation were set forth and the colonies were for the first time designated "the United States of America," was adopted in Congress, on July 4, by a vote of twelve colonies. The delegates from New York did not vote then because the State Convention authorizing them to do so was not held until July 9. On the same day (July 4) the Declaration was authenticated by the President and the Secretary of Congress and published, but not signed by the members. The engrossed parchment copy of the Declaration was not signed until August 2 when fifty-four delegates affixed the signatures that are now so well known. At a later date two others signed, making the names fifty-six in all.

Charles Carroll was not present in Congress on the eventful Fourth of July. He did not take his seat as a delegate from Maryland until July 18. He was among the very first of the Signers on August 2, however.

There is no truth in the legend that when he signed, hearing an onlooker remark "There go several millions" but since "there are several Carrolls and the British won't know which it is," he immediately identified himself by adding "of Carrollton" to his name and ever after kept that style of signing himself.

When Charles Carroll returned from finishing his education abroad and settled down in Maryland, in February, 1765, the estate of Carrollton was given to him by his father, who was known as "Charles Carroll of Doughoregan." On November, 1765, writing to his friend Edmund Jennings, Carroll ends the letter: "Your friend, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, by which appellation, if you favor me with an answer, direct to me your letter." There are many letters still extant similarly signed and all written years before the Declaration of Independence was thought of. Charles Carroll was engaged to be married to his cousin, Rachel Cooke, and obtained this dispensation for that purpose:

"I have granted a dispensation to Mr. Charles Carroll

of Carrollton to marry his cousin, Miss Rachel Cooke. Witness my hand.

October 14th, 1766. (Rev.) John Lewis, S.J.

Miss Cooke was taken ill soon after, however, and died on November 25, 1766, before the marriage ceremony could be performed.

The first formal Catholic celebration of the Fourth of July was in 1779 when M. Gerard, the French Minister to the United States, arranged to have a religious demonstration at St. Mary's Church, Philadelphia, which city was then the seat of the national Government of the federated colonies. He had arrived there on January 11, 1778.

On July 2, 1779, he sent the following invitation to the members of Congress, the President and Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania and other prominent citizens:

You are requested, on behalf of the Minister Plenipotentiary, to assist at the *Te Deum* which will be celebrated on Sunday, 4th of this month at noon, in the new Catholic chapel, to commemorate the anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America.

At Philadelphia, July 2d, 1779.

For a report of what took place at St. Mary's which was "the new Catholic chapel," on the occasion, the *Pennsylvania Packet* of July 10, 1779, supplies these details:

On Sunday last (being the anniversary of the independence of America) His Excellency the President, and the honorable members of Congress, attended Divine worship in the forenoon in Christ Church, where an excellent sermon, suitable to the occasion, was preached by the Rev. Mr. White, rector of the Episcopal churches in this city, and one of the chaplains to Congress.

At noon the President and members of Congress with the President and chief magistrates of this State and a number of other gentlemen and their ladies, went by invitation from the honorable the Minister of France to the Catholic chapel, where this great event was celebrated by a well-adapted discourse pronounced by the Minister's chaplain, and a *Te Deum*, solemnly sung by a number of good voices, accompanied by the organ, and other kinds of music.

In his official report to his Government Minister Gerard said:

It is the first ceremony of the kind in the thirteen States and

it is thought that the éclat of it will have a beneficial effect on the Catholics, many of whom are suspected of not being very much attached to the American cause. My chaplain delivered a short address which has obtained general approbation, and which Congress has demanded for publication.

Minister Gerard's chaplain who officiated at the Fourth of July *Te Deum* was the Rev. Seraphin Bandol a Recollet. Congress ordered his sermon to be printed and it was circulated in a broadside, giving this translation of the French text:

*Gentlemen:—We are assembled to celebrate the anniversary of that day which Providence had marked in His eternal decrees, to become the epoch of liberty and independence in the thirteen United States of America.*

That Being whose almighty hand holds all existence beneath its dominion undoubtedly produces in the depths of His wisdom those great events which astonish the universe of which the most presumptuous, though instrumental in accomplishing them, dare not attribute to themselves the merit. But the finger of God is still more peculiarly evident in that happy, that glorious revolution which calls forth this day's festivity. He hath struck the oppressors of a free people, free and peaceful, with the spirit of delusion which renders the wicked artificers of their own proper misfortunes. Permit me, my dear brethren, citizens of the United States, to address you on this occasion. It is that God, that all powerful God who hath directed your steps; who, when you were without arms forged for you the sword of justice; who, when you were in adversity poured into your hearts the spirit of courage, wisdom, and fortitude, and who hath at length raised up for your support a youthful sovereign whose virtues bless and adorn a sensible, a fruitful and a generous nation.

God will not regret our joy, for He is the author of it; nor will he forget our prayers for they ask but the fulfilment of the decrees He has manifested. Filled with this spirit, let us in concert with each other raise our hearts to the Eternal; let us implore His infinite mercy to be pleased to inspire the rulers of both nations with the wisdom and force necessary to perfect what He hath begun. Let us in a word unite our voices to beseech Him to dispense His blessings upon the counsels and the arms of the allies and that we may soon enjoy the sweets of a peace that will soon cement the Union and establish the prosperity of the two empires.

It is with this view that we shall cause that canticle to be performed which the custom of the Catholic Church hath consecrated to be at once a testimonial of public joy, a thanksgiving for benefits received from heaven and a prayer for the continuance of its mercies.

In addition to this patriotic celebration of 1779 the Abbé Bandol was a factor in three other formal celebrations in St. Mary's, Philadelphia, at which Congress assisted. These were the requiem Mass, September 18, 1779, for the funeral of the French General Du Coudray who was accidentally drowned while crossing the Schuylkill River two days before; at the requiem Mass, May 8, 1780, for the funeral of the Spanish Government's Agent Don Juan Miralles, who died in Washington's camp at Morristown, N. J., April 28; at the *Te Deum*, November 4, 1781, for the victory at Yorktown. St. Mary's was the church served by Father Farmer and his fellow Jesuits who were the pioneer pastors in Philadelphia.

## The First American Flag

NEW YEAR'S Day, Jan. 1, 1924, marked the 149th anniversary of the raising over the American Headquarters at Cambridge, Mass., of the first American flag to fly the thirteen stripes symbolizing the Thirteen Original Colonies, Jan. 1, 1776. This flag was designed and presented to the First City Troop of Philadelphia Light Horse, by its first captain, Abram Markoe, in 1774-1775. It was adopted the same year by Congress on the recommendation of Benjamin Franklin, Lynch and Harrison, but retained the British Union in the corner. It was only after the Declaration of Independence that Congress by a resolution adopted on January 14, 1777 ordered the "Union" to be replaced by thirteen stars.

Like the old Liberty Bell, this primitive flag has been carefully preserved, in a double glass case, in the spacious armory of the First City troop of Philadelphia where it has been viewed by hundreds of thousands of visitors and where it is still on exhibition. The cavalry company known as the First City troop is still in existence, having played an honorable part in every American war since the Revolution, and descendants of its first captain, of the fifth generation, are still recorded on its muster roll.

The original flag was carried in all important parades in which the First City troop took part until about the year 1830, when its condition owing to old age and exposure and the consequent risk, prevented further use in service, and it was placed in its present glass safe for permanent preservation.

Residing now at St. Paul, Minn., are thirteen lineal descendants of the designer of the first American flag to flaunt the thirteen stripes within its folds as symbolical of the thirteen original States of America, they, and also some others in several of our leading cities are all Catholics. Two of them are Jesuits.

The Rev. Charles Constantine Pise, D.D., was, on nomination of Henry Clay, elected Chaplain of the United States Senate, December 11, 1832. He was born November 22, 1801, at Annapolis, Maryland. His father was an Italian; his mother, Margaret Gamble, a native of Philadelphia. He died in Brooklyn, New York, April,

1866, when Pastor of the Church of St. Charles Borromeo.

During the Know Nothing days when Catholics were charged with disloyalty to the institutions of our country, he, when visiting Washington City, seeing the Stars and Stripes displayed over the Capitol was inspired to write the following :

THE AMERICAN FLAG

They say I do not love thee,  
Flag of my native land ;  
Whose meteor folds above me,  
To the free breeze expand ;  
Thy broad stripes proudly streaming,  
And thy stars so brightly gleaming.

They say I would forsake thee,  
Should some dark crisis lower ;  
That, recreant, I should make thee  
Crouch to a foreign power ;  
Seduced by license ample,  
On thee, best flag, to trample.

They say that bolts of thunder,  
Cast in the forge of Rome,  
May rise and bring thee under,  
Flag of my native home,  
And with one blow dis sever  
My heart from thee forever.

False are the words they utter,  
Ungenerous their brand ;  
And rash the oaths they mutter,  
Flag of my native land ;  
Whilst still, in hope above me,  
Thou wavest—and I love thee !

God is my love's first duty,  
To whose eternal name  
Be praise for all thy beauty,  
Thy grandeur and thy fame ;  
But ever have I reckoned  
Thine, native flag, my second.

Woe to the foe or the stranger,  
Whose sacrilegious hand,  
Would touch thee, or endanger,  
Flag of my native land.  
Though some would fain discard thee,  
Mine should be raised to guard thee.

Then wave, thou first of banners,  
And in thy gentle shade,  
Beliefs, opinions, manners,  
Promiscuously be laid;  
And there, all discord ended,  
Our hearts and souls be blended.

Stream on, stream on, before us,  
Thou labarum of light.  
While in one generous chorus,  
Our vows to thee we plight;  
Unfaithful to thee—never!  
My native land forever.

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Bishop Hughes, in a letter to Mayor Harper of New York, May 17, 1844, wrote:

"I can even now remember my reflections on first beholding the American flag. It never crossed my mind that a time might come when that flag, the emblem of freedom, should be divided, by apportioning its stars to the citizens of native birth and its stripes only as the portion of the foreigner. I was, of course, but young and inexperienced; and yet, even recent events have not diminished my confidence in that ensign of civil and religious liberty. It is possible that I was mistaken; but I still cling to the delusion, if it be one, and as I trusted to that flag, on a *Nation's faith*, I think it more likely that its stripes will disappear altogether; and that before it shall be employed as an instrument of bad faith, toward the foreigners of every land, the white portions will blush with crimson; and then the glorious stars alone will remain." (Maury's "Statesmen of America," p. 532).

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On July 4, 1833, Dr. Pise delivered an address in the

House of Delegates at Annapolis, Maryland, in which he said :

"Notwithstanding the great talents of our countrymen, which the emergencies of the times called forth and excited; notwithstanding their devotedness, determination and patriotism, our cause would have been doubtful, had it not been supported by the power and virtue of foreign volunteers. Immortal thanks and gratitude are due to the illustrious but unfortunate monarch, the martyred Louis XVI, who, by his timely assistance, taught our fathers not to despair, and joined them in alliance on terms of perfect equality; furnished them with money and military stores, and efficaciously contributed to put a period to the revolutionary struggle.

"And what shall I say of the far-famed individuals who quitted their country and their families, entered into our armies, fought our battles, and won our victories! What eulogy can do justice to the gallant Lafayette, whose toils did not cease with the war, but whose endeavors to establish our interests, in commercial and political arrangements yield not to the splendor of his achievements during the contest. That aged companion of Washington, after an interval of nearly half a century, has continued the steady friend of our country and our institutions, he has revisited our shores—he had a favorable opportunity of judging of the effects of our independence, and the blessing of liberty—and the welcome, the enthusiastic gratulations, the triumphal arches, the trophies of honor, the expressions of respect, the universal jubilee of the entire republic, have borne witness to the gratitude which we cherish for him, and the veneration in which his name is held.

"In conjunction with Lafayette, the memories of other foreign heroes burst upon our view: shall time ever obscure the lustre that brightens the names of Rochambeau, and Chastellux; of D'Estaigne, De Grasse, or De Barras and Kosciuszko—Kosciuszko who fought from the Hudson to the Potomac, from the Atlantic to the lakes of Canada—Kosciuszko! who, in the language of Von Neimciwiser, who delivered his eulogium at Warsaw, 'patiently endured incredible fatigue, acquired immortal renown—and, what is infinitely more valuable in his estimation, ensured the gratitude of a liberated nation.

The American flag waved over the forts in the United States, and the great work of liberation was finished, before he would consent to return to his native Poland' —and

'Freedom shrieked when Kosciuszko died!'

"It is a special privilege for me to have it in my power, this day, to strew my handful of flowers over the urns, and add my leaf of glory to the chaplets, of such god-like men. No matter from what quarter of the world they might have come, or in what clime they might have been cradled; no matter what language they might have spoken, or what religion they might have professed. But double is that privilege, and most consoling to my bosom the circumstances, when I reflect, that the nations which gave birth to those immortal benefactors of America, those pure and lofty lovers of liberty and republicanism, were Roman Catholics. France, at that era, saw upon her throne the worthy descendant of Louis XIV, the religious successor of Charlemagne and Louis IX. Enthusiastic in his attachment to his creed, and yet the avowed patron of American independence—the powerful co-operator in setting our country free, and at length a martyr to the principles of his Church, the conviction of his conscience —the victim—whom posterity shall ever be proud to venerate—to fanaticism and anarchy.

"Poland, the birth-place of Kosciuszko, from immemorial ages, the land of Catholicism, and the home of the spirit of freedom. Her name is synonomous with patriotism, magnanimity, and glory and misfortune. Impatient of slavery, she writhes under oppression; born for liberty, she is yoked to the car of despotism. She has arisen in her indignation, and with a spirit that cannot brook the yoke, and a soul that bursts from its manacles, and a heart that breaks under tyranny, has attempted to be free! But her efforts were crushed by the wrath of Russia, the hosts of serfs and Cossacks swarmed over her plains, like the locusts over Egypt. The Leviathan of the North has devoured the hopes of Polish liberty. The most gallant nation is in chains, she whose arm was ever extended to befriend the cause of freedom, has been seen to fall, without the prospect of resurrection, into the grave of oppression.

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"The conduct of France and Poland, in our regard, ought to silence forever the voice of prejudice, which, even at the present day, proclaims the Roman Catholic religion hostile to the genius of republican institutions. And I rejoice that so auspicious an occasion presents itself in which, I may adduce, in refutation of such groundless assertions the actions of the Catholic countries and Catholic individuals."

## Our Lady's New World Dower

**I**N the Appendix to the history of the Visitation Foundation at Washington, D C., compiled in 1894 by the late George Parsons Lathrop and his wife, Rose Hawthorne Lathrop, with the title "A Story of Courage," attention is drawn to the extraordinary number of important events in American history that have fallen on the dates of the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, the patroness of the nation. The list as there enumerated follows:

The father of Cecilius Calvert had obtained a patent from James I for the colonization of Maryland, and his son and successor afterward petitioned for a transfer of the charter to himself. King Charles I wished to act gratefully and gracefully towards his father's old and trusted friend; and, notwithstanding the violent opposition of the "Virginia Company," issued his grant on July 2 (the Feast of the Visitation), 1633.

It was on the morrow of the Presentation that the Maryland Emigrants set sail, and on the Annunciation that they landed and celebrated Mass in this new region of the New World, naming the town here built, St. Mary's. The province they called Maryland, *Terra Maria*; and the bay whose shores nearly a century previous, had been sanctified by the blood of eight Jesuit martyrs, had from them received the name of St. Mary's Bay. It was afterwards changed to "Chesapeake," but, by a singular coincidence, the names of Virgin and Mary, belonging to the States of its eastern and western bank, and given in honor of two queens, will ever remain memorials of its consecration to Mary, the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven.

On July 2, 1584, Queen Elizabeth's ship descried the coast of Virginia. On July 2, 1767, the duty on tea was fixed by Parliament—which act brought on the American Revolution, and the independence of our country. On July 2, 1775, George Washington reached headquarters at Cambridge, and assumed command of the army.

On July 2, 1776, American Independence was voted in Congress; on the following day the Declaration was drawn up; and on the fourth, publicly read and proclaimed.

On July 2, 1778, the French fleet, under Count

D'Estaing, appeared off the coast of Rhode Island; whereupon the penal laws against Catholics were repealed by the legislature. On the eve of the Feast of the Visitation, 1784, our American Minister, Benjamin Franklin, received a visit in Paris from the Pope's Nuncio, on the business of appointing a Bishop for the United States. Franklin writes that, on his own recommendation, Rev. J. Carroll was appointed.

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8), has also been a day of special blessing.

On Dec. 8, 1774, by an act of the Maryland Convention, toleration was granted to Catholics. On Dec. 8, 1776, Washington, pursued by the British (after his disasters on Long Island and in New York), crossed the Delaware in the night; thus saving his army, and the cause of American liberty, from total disaster. On Dec. 8, 1791, the first Catholic American Bishop was hailed in his episcopal city, having been consecrated in England, on the Feast of the Assumption, 1790.

Our United States are dedicated to Mary Immaculate; and Columbus himself dedicated the New World to the Queen of Heaven—the flagship of his expedition being named "*Santa Maria de la Concepcion*."

The Feast of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque is, likewise, a day of note in our American history. The two decisive battles of Saratoga and Yorktown, on which the destinies of our Union depended, were accomplished on Oct. 17 (the day of the year of her death), 1777 and 1781. On October 17, 1777, the British army, under Burgoyne, surrendered to the Americans at Saratoga; and in Irving's "Life of Washington" appears the following account of the surrender of Yorktown: "The hopes of Lord Cornwallis were now at an end. His works were tumbling in ruins about him under an incessant cannonade. He ordered a parley to be beaten on the morning of the 17th (October) and despatched a flag with a letter to Washington, proposing a cessation of hostilities for twenty-four hours; and that two officers might be appointed by each side to meet and settle terms for the surrender."

The discussion of the terms occupied that and the following day; and the ceremony of the surrender took place

on the 19th, thus ending the Revolutionary War. Cornwallis's decision to surrender had been made, however, on October 17th, the Feast of St. Margaret Mary of the Visitation Order, with whom the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus began.

These coincidences prove absolutely nothing, in the mere human sense; yet, even to the ordinary mind, they are of interest as showing a curious series of facts and correspondences in dates; namely, that some of the momentous and decisive events in the history of the forming of the American nation took place on days especially devoted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the feasts of the Visitation and the Immaculate Conception.

### Washington's Adopted Son on Tolerant

PERTINENT to these times no less than to the days in which it was written, is a letter which was sent by George Washington Parke Custis, adopted son of the First President, to a committee of New York gentlemen in response to an invitation to Mr. Custis to participate in a patriotic celebration:

Arlington House, 23d February, 1857.

To Isaac Bell, Jr., Isaac Doyton, John M. McCunn,  
Edward C. West, Richard B. Connolly, and William  
Robinson, Esqrs. Committee of Invitation.  
Gentlemen:

Your most kind letter, in which you do me the honor to invite me to participate with you in a Banquet by the Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty in New York, came duly to hand.

The mention of Civil and Religious Liberty calls up recollections dear to my heart, of my poor services in that holy cause in gone by days, while old age and distance must plead my excuse for my not joining your festive Board.

Civil & Religious Liberty & the principles of the Revolution, were instilled in my mind in my infancy in

the sacred shades of Mount Vernon, they have grown with my growth & strengthened with my strength, up to the close of my Seventy-sixth year, will continue to be cherished as the proudest feelings of an American heart, during my few remaining years, and only depart from me, when I shall depart for worlds unknown.

The American People have forgotten the great principles of the Revolution, for which their fathers fought & bled, in "The Times that tried men's souls," & introduced in modern times bigotry & intolerance, where all should be kindliness & brotherly love.

America too has forgotten her old and long tried friend, Unhappy Erin, that aided her in the struggle for her Independence, when in the wide world she had no aid beside, while from the times of America's old Battle Day, down to the present hour, more gallant sons of the Emerald Isle have mustered around the "Star Spangled Banner," than from all the other foreign nations of the Earth.

The adopted Son and last survivor of the Domestic Family of the Beloved Chief, I speak to my countrymen as with a voice from the Tomb of Mount Vernon, I pray God that the Americans seeing the errors of their ways, may return to First Principles, the spirit of the Revolution and Civil and Religious Liberty, then while their glorious Empire continues in its mighty progress of prosperity, power, and National Aggrandisement, and the Land of Washington fulfilling its high destiny, become Mistress of the World.

Accept Gentlemen my grateful thanks for your most kindly remembrance of an old man, with the essence of the very high regard & esteem, with which I have the honor,

To be Yr. oblig. Friend & Servt.

GEORGE W. P. CUSTIS.